

Dear SIC Members and Friends:

In this issue of *SIC Clips & Quips* (Volume 3, Issue 3), we'd like to call attention to several items of interest to local SIC members and SIC supporters:

- **SC-SIC Annual Conference, Saturday, March 19** – In the event you haven't yet registered to attend, please remember the 2011 SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC) Annual Conference, Saturday, March 19, at St. Andrews Middle School, 1231 Bluefield Road, Columbia. The theme of this year's conference is "Ready, Set...Goal!" and will highlight the importance of the focused and collaborative efforts – and the results of these efforts – by parents, community and educators in the lives of our schools and students. Keynote speaker for the event will be Brenda G. Thomas of the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Another high point of the day will be the presentation of the 2011 SC-SIC Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award. Our five finalists this year are: Brennen Elementary School (Richland1); Burgess Elementary School (Horry); Jesse Boyd Elementary School (Spartanburg 7); North Augusta Elementary School (Aiken); Sullivan Middle School (Rock Hill 3). Registration fee for this event is just **\$20.00**, which includes a buffet lunch. (Advance registration is required – **by Friday, March 11** – there will be no onsite registration the day of the conference!) The conference agenda and registration form can be downloaded from our website, www.sic.sc.gov. Please feel free to share this information with others who may wish to attend!
- **Million Penny Challenge** – The American Red Cross of Central South Carolina is sponsoring the Million Penny Challenge, in which local schools can raise funds for their local Red Cross. What is often considered the nation's most unappreciated currency, the penny holds value. Even in today's economy, a million pennies are still worth \$10,000! You can help give the gift that saves a life, today! The Challenge will run from March 15 through April 15. Does your school want to be a sponsor? Find out more and sign up today at <http://american.redcross.org/millionpenny>.
- **This School's Got Talent!** – South Carolina Future Minds (a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting excellence in South Carolina's K-12 public schools by partnering with corporate donors to find and support successful school programs) is on a search for the best talent in South Carolina's public schools. Those selected will be invited to perform at the SC Teacher of the Year Celebration on April 27 at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. The event which will be filmed by SCETV and broadcast across the state by Time Warner Cable. If you know of a student or student group with talents second to none, nominate them today by submitting a short video of their performance under the "Contests" tab at Facebook.com/SouthCarolinaFutureMinds. Additional information is also available on the web at www.scfutureminds.org.
- **State House Update** – The legislative session is in full swing. Compiled from various sources, here's a sampling of a bills related to education now working their way through the South Carolina House and Senate:
 - On February 24, the House Ways and Means Committee adopted its proposed \$5.1 billion spending plan (**H.3700**) for FY11-12. Under the Ways and Means budget, \$101 million is being added to the Education Finance Act (EFA) next year for a projected base student cost of \$1,788, up from the current amount of \$1,617. Several programs were suspended via budget proviso, with their funding (a total of \$5.7 million) being distributed to local districts: SAT Improvement, High Schools that Work, Arts Curricula and Palmetto Gold & Silver awards. Education budget lines eliminated under the proposal (\$948,041) include character education, business/community partnerships, the nurse program and the Governor's Workforce Initiative. The following programs each received a 15% budget reduction: Writing Improvement Network, SC Geographic Alliance, SC School Improvement Council, Teacher Recruitment Program, CERRA, Student Health and Fitness, and Guidance/Career Specialist. Technical assistance funding was reduced by \$51.4 million, leaving \$6 million on the budget line. Education Improvement Act (EAA) funding is anticipated to increase by \$41 million for FY11-12. The House is scheduled to begin debate on the budget on March 14.

- On March 2, the House Ways & Means General Government, Personnel and Benefits Subcommittee met and discussed several bills: **H.3642** (Teacher salary step increases), a joint resolution allowing districts to pay teachers for FY11-2012 at their current salary without a negative impact to their experience credit; **H.3643** (Employment notification), a joint resolution extending the deadline to notify teachers of then employment for FY2011-2012 from April 15 to May 15. Teachers must notify the district within ten days of their acceptance of the contract; **H.3363** (Educational Professional Performance and Pay Accountability Act), a bill requiring the State Department of Education to create and implement a system for assessing the performance of teachers and other school-based staff (including principals and assistant principals) and provides a framework for rating teachers and other school staff on their job functions. It also requires SDE to develop guidelines for local school districts to establish pay plans that offer bonuses to highly effective personnel, and requires districts to develop plans encouraging parental involvement in all aspects of a student's education and development.
- On February 24, **H.3241** (Charter School Bill) received third reading in the House and was sent to the Senate. The House amended the bill before approval, deleting a provision requiring school districts to divert local funds to state-sponsored brick-and-mortar and virtual charter schools. In another amendment adopted by the House, if a school district files an application to start a charter school then the local district school board becomes the governing board of the charter school. An amendment was also approved allowing traditional public schools to deregulate much like charter schools, except that traditional schools may only employ noncertified teachers in a ratio of up to 10% of its teaching staff. (Ways & Means also adopted a budget proviso for the charter school district that includes a line in the state's annual appropriations bill. The committee approved \$25 million to the state charter district, funding the full base student cost plus \$3,250 per brick-and-mortar charter student, and the full base student cost plus \$1,700 for virtual school students.)
- On Monday, March 7 (Blatt Building, Room 101, 2:00 p.m.), the Ways & Means Property Tax Subcommittee will meet for a work session on **H.3713** (Point of Sale). This bill would repeal the point-of-sale provision from Act 388; some have estimated that this could have a significant negative fiscal impact for local governments.
- **H.3407** (Education Opportunity Act), a voucher and tuition tax credit proposal, is scheduled to come before the Ways and Means General Government, Personnel and Benefits Subcommittee on Tuesday, March 8 (Blatt Building, Room 521, 1½ hours after adjournment of the House). There is currently no fiscal impact statement for this bill, but some public education groups have expressed concerns about the fiscal impact on schools in previous voucher and tax credit proposals.
- Also on Tuesday, March 8, the House Education and Public Works K-12 Subcommittee will meet (Blatt Building, Room 433, 1½ hours after adjournment). The following bills will be discussed: **H.3748** (Education and Economic Development Act); **H.3035** (Length of School Term); **H.3028** (Teacher Contracts); **H.3070** (State Superintendent of Education).
- The Senate Education K-12 Subcommittee will meet on Wednesday, March 9 (Gressette Building, Room 406, 9:00 a.m.) to discuss various regulations, joint resolutions and bills: **Regulation Document 4156** (State Board of Education) Program for Assisting, Developing and Evaluating Principal Performance (PADEPP); **Regulation Document 4158** (State Board of Education) Requirements for Certification at the Advanced Level; **S.642** (End-of-Course Science Requirement); **S.432** (Consolidated School Districts Study Committee); **S.528** (Model Dating Violence Policy); **S.566** (Definitions of Safe Schools Climate Act); **H.3241** (Charter Schools).
- The Senate Education Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 9 (Gressette Building, Room 105, 10:00 a.m.), and will review **S.433** (Education Funding Reform) and other bills that could come out of the subcommittee prior to the full committee.

Should you have particular interest in one or more of these bills, contact your legislators to make your voice heard. More information on these, as well as House and Senate contact info, is available on the web at www.scstatehouse.gov.

Remember, *SIC Clips & Quips* is sent to all SIC members and supporters who share their email addresses with us. Please feel free to print out and share this information with fellow SIC members who may not have received it. We are here to help you, so please contact us any time!

Tom